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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/624,445	07/22/2003	Alan Cox	0113715.00134US1	6446

68998 7590 01/16/2008

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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2154	

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
01/16/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/624,445	COX, ALAN	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Ashok B. Patel	2154	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *31 October 2007*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-30* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) *1,4-7 and 9-17* is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *2,3,8, and 18-30* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-30 are subject to examination. Claims 1, 4-7 and 9-17 have been cancelled.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/31/2007 has been entered.

Prosecution History

3. Examiner would like to **re-state** the following prosecution history to establish it's relevancy in determining the correct interpretation of claim limitations and claim language and prior art's teachings.

A. First, Examiner would like to present the history of prosecution in its own chronological order as follows:

a. In response to claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Bulfer at al. (hereinafter Bulfer) (US 2006/0036701 A1), and further in view of Sherman et al (hereinafter Sherman)(US 2002/0194177 A1) stated in the Non-Final Office Action dated 03/27/2006, the Applicant's response dated 07/31/2006 presented the following arguments, which are copied here for presentation as they were:

"A careful reading of Sherman reveals that it does not teach or suggest updating a display according to a changed status for an electronic message. The description from Sherman that the Examiner cites is directed only to folders, and not to the e-mail messages or other information structures stored within the folders. The thrust of the Sherman reference in general, and of the text the Examiner cites in particular, is synchronization and other processing as applied to folders and subfolders, but not to the messages residing within those folders.

Sherman pointedly does not apply the synchronization processes it teaches to e-mail messages. Notice that Sherman does not ignore the subject of e-mail messages - rather, Sherman describes e-mall messages in peripheral contexts, unrelated to the synchronization that is the focus of the patent (see, for example, paragraph [0026]). In fact, Sherman teaches that the synchronization concepts it describes may be applied in other contexts, such as to file directories, task categories, notes, contacts and other categories of information (see paragraph [0077], but Sherman pointedly excludes e-mail messages."

b. Examiner then responded with the Final Office Action, dated 10/13/2006 with the following response along with the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Bulfer at al. (hereinafter Bulfer) (US 2006/0036701 A1), and further in view of Sherman et al (hereinafter Sherman)(US 2002/0194177 A1), which are copied here for presentation as they were:

"In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.,* 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Sherman teaches at para. [0011], "The intuitive characteristic of the invention's selective synchronization process can be applied to a wide variety of synchronizable information. One aspect of the invention includes applying the selective synchronization process to an e-mail folder hierarchy. The subsets of the e-mail folder hierarchy are synchronized between computing systems, such as a server and a client or "companion" device. Predetermined user actions that implicitly demonstrate the user's desire to synchronize particular folders of the hierarchy are defined, and when the user performs one of these predetermined actions, those particular folders are flagged as part of the subset of folders to be synchronized between the server and client. In this manner, only the folder subset that is determined by one of these actions to be of interest to the user, rather than the entire folder hierarchy, is synchronized. This is accomplished without requiring the user's explicit identification of the subset of folders to be synchronized."

Thus Sherman does teach synchronization and other processing as applied to folders and subfolders of an email folder.

As indicated clearly below, and in the previous office action, this teachings of Sherman is combined with the teaching of "Approval Folder" of Bulfer."

c. In response to the Final Office Action dated 10/13/2006, the Applicants responded with the following after final amendment of the claims 18 and 26 in question, which are copied here for presentation as they were:

"18. (Currently amended) A method for operating an electronic messaging system comprising:

routing an electronic message intended for a first user to at least two approvers, wherein each of the at least two approvers can approve or reject the electronic message;

presenting the electronic message on a display to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection;

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message;

routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved; and once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, ~~updating a display~~ notifying the at least one other approver ~~according to~~ of a changed status for the electronic message.

26. (Currently amended) A method for operating an electronic messaging system comprising:

directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient sent by a first user to at least two approvers, wherein each of the at least two approvers can approve or reject the electronic message;

presenting the electronic message on a display to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection;

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message;

routing the electronic message to the recipient if the electronic message is approved; and once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, ~~updating a display for~~ notifying the at least one other approver ~~according to~~ of a changed status for the electronic message."

d. Examiner responded by issuing an Advisory Action and the Applicant subsequently filed "Request for Continued Examination." With the above claim amendments as shown in "c."

e. Examiner issued Non-Final Office Action dated 05/01/2007 with the following "Response to Arguments" and rejections, which are copied here for presentation as they were:

"Response to Argument

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 2, 3, 8 and 18-30 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection, however, Examiner would like to request to consider the teachings of the following prior arts since these prior arts teach "routing an electronic message intended for a first user to at least two approvers, wherein each of the at least two approvers can approve or reject the electronic message" and more in relation to the claimed limitations of claims 18 and 26.

a. LU US 2002/0107950

b. Gatz et al. (US 2002/0049806 A1)

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

5. Claims 2, 3, 8 and 18-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter, which was not described in the specification of this application under examination in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art to use and/or make the invention.

Referring to claim 18,

The specification of this application under examination does not contain subject matter to implement limitations, "notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message.", as cited in Claim 18. Examiner has reviewed the specification of this application under examination and could not find support for the additional limitations as claimed.

Examiner is interpreting this limitation as "sending any kind of indication of the rejection or approval."

Referring to claims 2, 3 and 19-24,

Claims 2, 3 and 19-24 are rejected for the reasons set forth for claim 18 as above, because of their dependency on claim 18.

Referring to claim 26,

The specification of this application under examination does not contain subject matter to implement limitations, "notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message.", as cited in Claim 26. Examiner has reviewed the specification of this application under examination and could not find support for the additional limitations as claimed.

Examiner is interpreting this limitation as "sending any kind of indication of the rejection or approval."

Referring to claims 8 and 27-30,

Claims 8 and 27-30 are rejected for the reasons set forth for claim 26 as above, because of their dependency on claim 26.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless-

> (e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 2, 3, 8 and 18-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mastrianni (US 2002/0116641 A1)."

B. Second, Now that we have looked at the history of the prosecution, the above Applicant's Argument No. 1 is presented in response to the Non-Final Office Action dated 05/01/2007 of "c." above.

As noted by the Applicant, "notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message." is nothing but "The information presented to the approver is updated when an electronic message is approved. (paragraph [0044]). Once the approvers' devices are synchronized, all of the approvers are presented with the same information. (paragraph [0028]). Therefore, when one approver approves an electronic message, the other approver is notified of the approval by the fact that the electronic message is shown as moved from the unapproved folder to the approved folder."

C. Third, these arguments that are presented in the above paragraph "B.", was argued by the Applicant in response to the Non-Final Office Action dated 03/27/2006 and Final Office Action dated 10/13/2006 providing the claim rejections based on the same reasoning.

D. Examiner's response to Applicant's Argument No. 2:

Therefore, the following new rejection is being provided in response to the amended claims providing the methodology as presented in Applicant's Argument No. 1 , "The information presented to the approver is updated when an electronic message is approved. (paragraph [0044]). Once the approvers' devices are synchronized, all of the approvers are presented with the same information. (paragraph [0028]). Therefore, when one approver approves an electronic message, the other approver is notified of

the approval by the fact that the electronic message is shown as moved from the unapproved folder to the approved folder. ", with the following remarks:

Claims 18 and 26 does have any indication of any kind of "folder(s)".

"It is the claims that define the claimed invention, and it is claims, not specifications that are anticipated or unpatentable. *Constant v. Advanced Micro-Devices Inc.*, 7 USPQ2d 1064."

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed 07/31/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive for the following reasons:

Applicant's argument:

"The "notifying" element is disclosed throughout the specification, for example at paragraph [0006]. The message being shown as moved from the unapproved folder to the approved folder is merely an exemplary embodiment of the notifying element."

"A careful reading of Sherman reveals that it does not teach or suggest notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for an electronic message. The description from Sherman that the Examiner cites is directed only to folders, and not to the e-mail messages or other information structures stored within the folders. The gist of the Sherman reference in general, and of the text the Examiner cites in particular, is synchronization and other processing as applied to folders and subfolders, but not to the messages residing within those folders.

Sherman pointedly does not apply the synchronization processes it teaches to e-mail messages. Sherman does not ignore the subject of e-mail messages - rather,

Sherman describes e-mail messages in peripheral contexts, unrelated to the synchronization that is the focus of the patent (see, for example, paragraph [0026]). In fact, Sherman teaches that the synchronization concepts it describes may be applied in other contexts, such as to file directories, task categories, notes, contacts and other categories of information (see paragraph [0077], but Sherman pointedly excludes e-mail messages. All of the alternative embodiments called out in Sherman are directed to categories related to the e-mail messages, but are specifically not directed to the e-mail messages themselves."

Examiner's response:

As stated in the above "Prosecution History", in response to the claim rejection for "notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message", in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, Applicant provided that "notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message." is nothing but "The information presented to the approver is updated when an electronic message is approved. (paragraph [0044]). Once the approvers' devices are synchronized, all of the approvers are presented with the same information. (paragraph [0028]). Therefore, when one approver approves an electronic message, the other approver is notified of the approval by the fact that the electronic message is shown as moved from the unapproved folder to the approved folder."

And this is exactly what Sherman effervescently teaches evidently in the following paragraphs and many more:

- "[0010] One aspect of the invention allows subsets of an object set to be synchronized between multiple computing systems. The object set is a set of certain information items, such as folders in an e-mail folder hierarchy. Predetermined user actions that implicitly reveal the user's desire to synchronize certain objects are defined."
- "[0011] The intuitive characteristic of the invention's selective synchronization process can be applied to a wide variety of synchronizable information. One aspect of the invention includes applying the selective synchronization process to an e-mail folder hierarchy. The subsets of the e-mail folder hierarchy are synchronized between computing systems, such as a server and a client or "companion" device. Predetermined user actions that implicitly demonstrate the user's desire to synchronize particular folders of the hierarchy are defined, and when the user performs one of these predetermined actions, those particular folders are flagged as part of the subset of folders to be synchronized between the server and client. In this manner, only the folder subset that is determined by one of these actions to be of interest to the user, rather than the entire folder hierarchy, is synchronized. This is accomplished without requiring the user's explicit identification of the subset of folders to be synchronized."

Claim Rejections - 35 USC 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that

the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 2, 3,8 and 18-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Bulfer at al. (hereinafter Bulfer) (US 2006/0036701 A1), and further in view of Sherman et al (hereinafter Sherman)(US 2002/0194177 A1)

Referring to claim 18,

Lu teaches a method for operating an electronic messaging system (Fig. 1a) comprising:

routing an electronic message intended for a first user (Fig. 1a, element 150) to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the electronic message being routed to the first user (Fig. 1a, element 160, page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.");

presenting the electronic message to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection (Abstract," A message screening system includes routing to a supervisory recipient an electronic message directed to an intended recipient. The supervisory recipient then is allowed to screen the electronic message by approving or rejecting the electronic message. The electronic message then is forwarded to the intended recipient if the electronic message is approved by the supervisory recipient.")

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the

approvers presented with the electronic message; routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved (page 2, para.[0023], "The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked senders 110 may be stored at supervisory recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender 110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110 and, based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key. Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150.")

Although Lu clearly teaches at page 2, para.[0016], "For example, intended and supervisory recipients 150, 160 may include personal computer systems or other electronic devices such as a pager, a personal digital assistant, or a wireless telephone for communicating electronic messages.", and at page 2, para.[0022] "Supervisory recipient 160 may be provided with a viewing screen having one or more control panels that allow supervisory recipient to approve or reject the electronic message for receipt

by intended recipient 150.",and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.", Lu is silent in "presenting a message in Approval folder" and "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. ("presenting a message in Approval folder"").

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "display depicting approval folder" (Fig. 3) of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables the parents to individually (one or more supervisory recipients 160) bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

However, both references, Lu and Bulfer fail to teach "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

Sherman teaches in Fig. 8A and 8B and para.[0059], viewing of listing of messages by folders. Also Sherman teaches the subfolder synchronization at para.[0065]. Also Sherman teaches that synchronization can be between server and any of the user devices at Fig. 4 at folder or subfolder level of the any of the folder level as depicted in Fig. 5. Sherman teaches at para.[0045]," The folder hierarchy illustrated in FIG. 5 represents a typical hierarchy that is created by the user on a server or desktop computer. When the user connects a companion device (such as an H/PC) to the server or desktop computer, a subset or the entire set of folders may be synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder. That is, an "expanded" flag, which is set on a folder, pertains to the subfolder list of that folder and means that its subfolders will be synchronized. In this manner, the subfolders themselves are not necessarily individually marked in any way.", and at para.[0075]," In another example, a user may be provided with a GUI screen or other UI methodology to explicitly select subfolders that are to be excluded from the synchronization process."(notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message.")

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the 'folder" and/or "subfolder level" synchronization" for the mail objects on user owned PC and its companion devices (a

companion device (such as an H/PC) to the server or desktop computer, a subset or the entire set of folders may be synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder.) to the combined teachings of Lu and Bulfer such that the only required "folder" or "subfolder", such as Bulfer's "approval folder", can be synchronized among the various approval display devices used by more than one parent recipients of Lu.

The advantage is that one parent would immediately know what the other parent approved thereby not repeating the approval action.

Referring to claims 19 and 20,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", Lu fails to teach the method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the

electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124.

Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail **accounts for parents** and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "account for parents" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables any one of the parents (account for parents) to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 21

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu fails to teach method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the

electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of "approval folder" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set up of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval

folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts (wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message) and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 22,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." And

accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para.[0016]).

Lu fails to teach "message is being routed to a single folder.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." ("message is being routed to a single folder.")

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of apply "account for parents", "approval folder" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to

bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 23,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is routed to the first user upon by being routed to a folder, accessible by the first user from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para. [0016] and [0017])

Referring to claim 24,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is deleted upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy (para. [0021]).

Referring to claim 25,

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is archived at a location that is inaccessible to the first user upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy (para. [0021]).

Referring to claims 2 and 3,

Lu teaches the method of claim 4418, further comprising applying a filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is approved if the electronic message passes the filter, and the method of claim 4418, further comprising applying

filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is rejected if the electronic message passes the filter. (para.[0022]-[0024])

Referring to claim 8,

Lu teaches the method of claim -1-524, further comprising, if delivery of the electronic message to the intended recipient is approved, sending a notification to the first user. (para. [0021])

Referring to claim 26,

Lu teaches a method for operating an electronic messaging system (Fig. 1a) comprising:

directing an electronic message to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.");

presenting the electronic message to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection (Abstract," A message screening system includes routing to a supervisory recipient an electronic message directed to an intended recipient. The supervisory recipient then is allowed to screen the electronic message by approving or rejecting the electronic message. The electronic message then is forwarded to the intended recipient if the electronic message is approved by the supervisory recipient.")

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message; routing the electronic message to the

first user if the electronic message is approved (page 2, para.[0023], "The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked senders 110 may be stored at supervisory recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender 110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110 and, based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key. Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150.")and

Although Lu clearly teaches at page 2, para.[0016], "or example, intended and supervisory recipients 150, 160 may include personal computer systems or other electronic devices such as a pager, a personal digital assistant, or a wireless telephone for communicating electronic messages.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu is silent in "presenting a message in Approval folder", directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient

sent by a first user to at least two approvers prior to the electronic message being routed to the intended recipient " and "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." ("presenting a message in Approval folder" to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection"). Bulfer also teaches at para.[0023]," It is understood that the "reply to" field can be examined in addition to the sender field."(directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient prior to the electronic message being routed to the intended recipient)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of apply "account for parents", "approval folder", "presenting a message in Approval folder" and "examining reply to filed" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list and the approved messages can be sent by the child after examining "reply to" addresses which can also be added to the control list.

However, both references, Lu and Bulfer fail to teach "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

Sherman teaches in Fig. 8A and 8B and para.[0059], viewing of listing of messages by folders. Also Sherman teaches the subfolder synchronization at para.[0065]. Also Sherman teaches that synchronization can be between server and any of the user devices at Fig. 4 at folder or subfolder level of the any of the folder level as depicted in Fig. 5. Sherman teaches at para.[0045]," The folder hierarchy illustrated in FIG. 5 represents a typical hierarchy that is created by the user on a server or desktop computer. When the user connects a companion device (such as an H/PC) to

the server or desktop computer, a subset or the entire set of folders may be synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder. That is, an "expanded" flag, which is set on a folder, pertains to the subfolder list of that folder and means that its subfolders will be synchronized. In this manner, the subfolders themselves are not necessarily individually marked in any way.", and at para.[0075]," In another example, a user may be provided with a GUI screen or other UI methodology to explicitly select subfolders that are to be excluded from the synchronization process."(updating a display according to a changed status for the electronic message.")

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the 'folder" and/or "subfolder level" synchronization" for the mail objects on user owned PC and its companion devices (a companion device (such as an H/PC) to the server or desktop computer, a subset or the entire set of folders may be synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder.) to the combined teachings of Lu and Bulfer such that the displays of the only required "folder" or "subfolder", such as Bulfer's "approval folder", can be synchronized among the various approval display devices used by more than one parent recipients of Lu.

The advantage is that one parent would immediately know what the other parent approved thereby not repeating the approval action.

Referring to claims 27 and 28,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", Lu fails to teach the method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender

contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124.

Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail **accounts for parents** and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "account for parents" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables any one of the parents (account for parents) to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 29,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(two approvers to approve

or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu fails to teach method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer

teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of "approval folder" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set up of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts (wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message) and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Referring to claim 30,

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(wherein the electronic

message is routed to the at least two approvers). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." And accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para.[0016]).

Lu fails to teach "message is being routed to a single folder.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025]," The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer

teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." ("message is being routed to a single folder.")

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of apply "account for parents", "approval folder" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

Conclusion

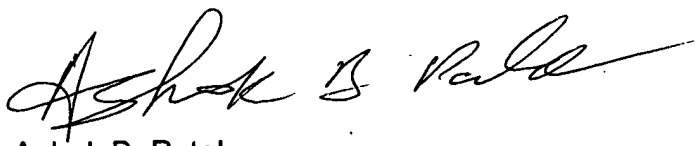
Examiner's note: Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings of the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant in preparing responses,

to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ashok B. Patel whose telephone number is (571) 272-3972. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30 am-4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nathan A. Flynn can be reached on (571) 272-1915. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



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